



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

DATE: September 30, 2015
TO: Members of the Tampa Bay Refugee Task Force
FROM: Janet Blair, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: August 11th 2015 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: October 6, 2015
Time: 1:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.
Location: The Children’s Board of Hillsborough County
1002 E Palm Ave, Tampa, FL
Contact: Janet Blair
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This task force has been active in the Tampa area for many years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and mutual assistance associations. An average of 45 people attends these meetings on a regular basis. The purpose of these meetings is to increase awareness of the refugee populations, share best practices, build collaborations between agencies, spot trends in refugee populations, characteristics or movements, help create good communication among service providers, get informed about upcoming community events, request for proposals, training, workshops, conferences, etc., at the local, state and national level; discuss refugee program service needs and possible solutions to meeting those needs. Meeting participants also receive updates, information and clarification on new federal and state regulations and policy changes pertaining to refugees. If there are any issues that you would like to include in the agenda, please contact me at the above address.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

TAMPA BAY AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MINUTES

Mission Statement: Helping Refugees to settle, integrate and thrive through support, education and community.

This meeting was held at Pinellas Technical College located at 154 Ave North, Clearwater, Florida. Janet Blair, Refugee Services Community Liaison for the SunCoast Region represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A total of 40 were present during this meeting. Janet called the meeting to order at 1:37pm.

Presentations:

Presentations were given by Talia Drayton on the new program, Youth for Cultural Understanding and by Katie Addison and Joe Matthews from LanguageLine Solutions/Pacific Interpreters. Pacific Interpreters/ LanguageLine staff is available at provider sites for trainings and this can be arranged by emailing Kaddison@languageline.com

Refugee Services Update:

- Janet gave an overview of the Refugee Services regional report for the third quarter (April-June 2015) which noted a total of 1,321 new arrivals/clients with a total of 724 in Hillsborough County and 101 in Pinellas County. Year to date, there have been 2,238 arrivals to Hillsborough County, and 286 to Pinellas County. Current contracts total dollar amount for the region is \$10,687,094.
- Janet also shared the results of the 2014 Employment Uptake Analysis for contracted provider Lutheran Services, Florida Inc. on both sides of the bay. The employment program in Hillsborough County exceeded performance goals in 3 of the 5 measures. The employment program in Pinellas County exceeded the performance goals in 4 of the 5 measures. Hillsborough County Employment Program successfully placed 1,116 clients in jobs with 66% still employed at the 90 day follow-up. Pinellas Employment program placed 282 clients in jobs with 84% still employed at the 90 day follow-up. Both programs are on track to meet all performance goals by the end of the contract year.
- Janet also announced that the Task Force won a national award from Welcoming America for the Communications Contest. The 2014 World Refugee Day celebration won best event and was featured in a webinar with a publication to soon follow noting it as a best practice.

General Updates

Resettlement: Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) had 54 arrivals this summer with most clients coming from Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Catholic Charities had 123 families arrive and has 190 projected for the year. Coptic Orthodox Charities had 40 individual arrivals and a total of 165 arrivals are expected for this fiscal year. Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services (GCJFCS) has had a total of 84 individual arrivals this fiscal year and projects 110 total arrivals this fiscal year.

Welcoming Week Update—Hillsborough County is currently in the process of deciding to become an officially Welcoming County through Welcoming America. A cultural celebration commemorating National Welcoming Week is planned for Saturday, Sept. 19th at the University of South Florida (USF) in Tampa.

Catholic Charities—Program Manager, Debbi Jarrie, thanked the Task Force members & program staff who worked closely with them to successfully resettle a Syrian family with multiple health issues. It was pointed out that this is the type of collaboration that truly makes a difference for our clients.

Pinellas Technical College—Students and faculty are working with Refugee Services adult education provider, PREP, to put together a video on refugee success stories. The video will be shown at our December Task Force meeting.

Discussion/Announcements

- A brief Welcoming Week planning meeting will be held following the Task Force meeting today.
- Task Force events/programs have been featured in the USF magazine and the Tampa Tribune in the past two months.
- The December meeting will include our annual end of the year celebration with Sylvia Acevedo and Debbi Jarrie coordinating food for the meeting.
- Refugee Services brochures are being updated and will be distributed at the Welcoming Week event and the next Task Force meeting.

Upcoming Task Force Meetings (1:30-3:30pm):

- **October 6th** Children's Board of Hillsborough County, 1002 East Palm Ave, Tampa
- **December 1st**, Pinellas Technical College Building 1, C.O.E. Room, 6100 154th Ave N, Clearwater